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S E C R E T ALGIERS 002225

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2015

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [AG](#) [SOFA](#)

SUBJECT: FORCE STATUS PROTECTION DEMARCHE DELIVERED

REF: A. STATE 193543

[1](#)B. ALGIERS 1877

Classified By: Ambassador Richard W. Erdman,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S) Ambassador delivered to FM Bedjaoui on October 26 Ref A demarche on securing protections for personnel engaged in the U.S.-Algerian military exercise this November, leaving behind proposed draft language for an exchange of diplomatic notes. Ambassador stressed our need for written assurances, noted the minimalist nature of the proposed language reflected their last conversation on this subject (Ref B), and urged a GOA response as soon as possible, in view of the immediacy of the upcoming exercise, which begins November 5. Bedjaoui, a former judge on the International Court of Justice at The Hague, quickly scanned the text of the proposed exchange, seemed to react positively, but said he would need to study the text before getting back to the Ambassador with a formal response, perhaps later in the afternoon.

[1](#)2. (S) In the event, Bedjaoui did not get back to us because of the accelerating pace of Mehlis Report-related diplomatic activity and his own early departure for the October 31 UNSC ministerial on the report. Embassy followed up our demarche with MFA Americas Directorate October 29 and again on October 31 with Director General Selmane. The latter said she was not in a position to provide a response at this time and would not be until FM Bedjaoui returned to Algeria (either November 1 or 2). She hoped to have something for us on Wednesday, November 2, but could not commit.

[1](#)3. (S) Post notes that November 1 is an Algerian holiday and that the celebration of the 'Eid holiday could begin November 2, depending on the sighting of the crescent moon. Even if 'Eid starts November 3, the MFA and most Algerian offices are expected to experience high rates of absenteeism November 2 in advance of the usual Thursday-Friday weekend. Post will report the GOA response once received. In light of the holidays ahead, the chances of receiving a timely response are receding. We will again be in touch with senior levels of the MFA on Wednesday but, realistically, should be prepared as a fallback to proceed with the exercise November 5 on the basis of previous discussions, where senior officials orally assured that our personnel will have the necessary protections. If we are not successful in obtaining agreement to our proposed exchange of notes prior to the start of the exercise, we will continue to press for a positive response as soon as possible thereafter.

ERDMAN